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Ranking Member

Honda Calls For Tillman 'friendly-fire' Hearings Defense Dept. Findings 'raise More

Tuesday, 27 March 2007 00:00

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Committee on Armed Services &nb
U.S. House of Representatives &
2120 Rayburn HOB &n
Washington, DC 20515 &nbs
Dear Chairman Skelton and Ranking Member Hunter:
I write to respectfully request that the House Committee on Armed Services hold hearings on the circumstances surrounding the "friendly-fire" death of Army Corporal Patrick Tillman. Following a series of highly flawed and protracted Army reviews of the matter, the Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General (IG) and the Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID)

yesterday issued the results of their own investigations into Corporal Tillman's death. While these are the most thorough investigations to date, rather than lay to rest troubling questions

regarding a personal and national tragedy, yesterday's reports raise more questions than they answer.
The IG and CID reports detail "missteps" of individual Army officers, yet they shed no light on what the Tillman case makes abundantly obvious: There appears to be a systemic breakdown in our military's reporting and investigative command structure that harmfully impacts our brave service men and women. Further, it remains unresolved whether any high-ranking officers are liable for criminal negligence, despite significant indications that they may be. Finally, the Tillman family and the nation have not yet been given clear answers as to what corrective action will be taken to ensure accountability in the mishandling of this case, and what specific steps will be taken to ensure this tragedy is not repeated.
After nearly three years of obfuscation, delay and potential criminal actions on the part of senior military officers, the Tillman family, our active duty service members and the nation as a whole are owed definitive answers to these lingering questions. Yesterday's reports fail to provide them.
The legacy of a fallen warrior, resolution for family members on the home front, and the confidence of our heroic service members in their civilian and military superiors require, at long last, an immediate conclusion to the investigation. I submit that, as elected representatives of the American people, it is incumbent upon us, as Members of Congress, to step in where others have failed and set right an injustice to those who selflessly and courageously defend our safety and freedom.

MICHAEL M. HONDA

Member of Congress